



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: ACTION ITEMS

Lead Department: City Manager

Meeting Date: December 18, 2023

Report #:2312-2324

TITLE

Policy and Services Committee Recommendations for Changes to the City Council Procedures and Protocols Handbook based on Prior City Council Referrals

RECOMMENDATION

The Policy and Services Committee recommends City Council action on the Procedures and Protocols Handbook (Handbook) referrals that the City Council sent to Policy and Services in spring 2023. Note: The City Council can act on as many or few of these as desired in this discussion. Any referral items not acted upon during this discussion will return to City Council at a later date.

BACKGROUND

The City Council discussed the City Council Procedures and Protocols Handbook on January 30 and March 20, 2023 and adopted the most recent version on April 24, 2023. At that time, the City Council referred a few discussion topics to the Policy and Services Committee. The Committee has discussed these referrals and made recommendations. The specific referrals from City Council are:

1. Procedures Section 1.1: Annual Organization of City Council
2. Procedures Section 5.1a(4): Video Participation for Public Comment
3. Procedures Section 8.2: Censure language was referred to committee for review
4. Protocols Section 2.2: Refrain from Lobbying Board and Commission Members
5. Protocols Section 2.8: The Role of Council Liaison to Boards or Commissions
6. Protocols Section 4: International Travel
7. Protocols Section 4.1: Miscellaneous Expenditures. Council referral for the committee to discuss the establishment of appropriate parameters for Council discretionary expenditures and whether to allocate \$2,000 annually from the Council contingency fund for each Council member to decide its purpose.

ANALYSIS

Given the range of issues covered in this report, the City Council may wish to prioritize topics to be discussed and act upon. Any recommendations not taken up may be deferred to a later date, while recognizing that the new year provides an opportunity for additional topics to be raised.

The specific recommendations from the Committee on the referral topics are in the **Attachment B** draft revised Handbook with short summaries below:

1. Procedures Section 1.1: Annual Organization of City Council
 - a. The Policy and Services Committee discussed this topic on May 9, 2023¹ with research provided on other cities (**Attachment A**) and requested staff to bring this to City Council in the 4th quarter for City Council to evaluate whether a ballot measure should be placed before the voters in 2024 to either extend the Mayoral term or to directly elect the Mayor.
2. Procedures Section 5.1a(4): Video Participation for Public Comment.
 - a. At the April 24th City Council discussion, the City Council voted to include the following text in the Handbook: “If found feasible by staff, members of the public may be given the opportunity to activate their personal video during their public comments.” Staff noted that this would be studied and, if found feasible, it would just be implemented instead of it being a discussion at Committee. Staff explored this feasibility and found that it is possible and will require staff training to implement. Given recent issues with remote testimony, however, staff requests confirmation of this direction before reflecting changes in the Handbook.
3. Procedures Section 8.2: Censure language was referred to committee for review
 - a. **Attachment B** draft Handbook includes Policy and Services Committee-recommended censure language. The proposed censure language is on draft Handbook pages 35-39. This was a 2-1 vote at committee.
4. Protocols Section 2.2: Refrain from Lobbying Board and Commission Members.
 - a. Policy and Services Committee discussed this with Board/Commission Chairs on June 13, 2023 and unanimously recommended language for City Council consideration. This language is included on draft Handbook page 45.
5. Protocols Section 2.8: The Role of Council Liaison to Boards or Commissions.
 - a. Policy and Services Committee discussed this with Board/Commission Chairs on June 13, 2023 and unanimously recommended language for City Council consideration. This language is included on draft Handbook page 46.
6. Protocols Section 4: International Travel

¹ May 9, 2023 Policy and Services Committee, Item 3,
<https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/Meeting?meetingTemplateld=12150>

- a. Policy and Services Committee discussed this referral in April 2023 and October 2023. The draft language is included on draft Handbook page 48. This was a 2-1 vote at committee.
7. Protocols Section 4.1: Miscellaneous Expenditures. Council referral for the committee to discuss the establishment of appropriate parameters for Council discretionary expenditures and whether to allocate \$2,000 annually from the Council contingency fund for each Council member to decide its purpose.
 - a. The Committee will discuss this referral in December and bring a recommendation to the City Council in 2024.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

The international travel policy would have a budget impact of up to \$40,000 with CPI as recommended by the Policy and Services Committee. This amount would be included as a budget item for the FY 2025 budget if approved by the full City Council. The Committee recommended this as new funding separate from the 'City Council Travel, Meetings, In person Conferences, and Events' budget of \$35,000 (FY 2024 amount) and separate from the 'City Council Contingency' budget annual appropriation of \$125,000. As currently recommended by the Policy and Services Committee, the proposed \$40,000 would be in addition to these existing allocations in future fiscal years. If the full City Council agrees to the \$40,000 (plus annual inflation adjustment), the City Council could confirm this as new funding as recommended by the Committee or could choose to be budget neutral with a realignment of the existing appropriated funds for next fiscal year.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Not a project.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Comparison of other Cities and Mayoral Appointments

Attachment B: Draft Updated Procedures and Protocols Handbook with Committee Recommendations November 2023

APPROVED BY:

Ed Shikada, City Manager